

Remarks

[0001] In item 1 of the Office Action the Examiner requests correction of the Specification at page 4, line 13. The Applicant points out that the offending phrase apparently occurs at the referenced location only in the WO 20041107910 (PCT/SG2004/000178) version of the Specification. It should be noted that the same phrase appears at page 4, line 23 of the Specification bearing the stamps of “IAP9 Rec’d PCT/PTO” and “10/560035”. Both above-mentioned versions of the Specification have been date-stamped as being received by the USPTO on 08-DEC-2009.

[0002] The Applicant here amends the Specification to correct the reference indicated as “brush head (100)”. The intended reference is to the handle head (110), rather than to the elongated handle (100), as proposed by the Examiner. Both elements appear to be flat in Figure 2b. Support for this amendment is based on the reference to “extended pins” which appear only on the handle head (110).

[0003] Claims 1-16 are presently pending in this application. All claims stand rejected. Claim 1 is here amended, while claims 2-16 are cancelled. New claims 17-22 are here presented.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

[0004] Claim 1 is here amended to precisely claim the preferred embodiment of the present application, entailing discernable features to differentiate the presently described invention from the cited art.

[0005] An important feature of the present invention relates to the elastic casing mounted or extended from the bristle pad. The elastic casing is slightly stretched upon engagement of the handle head with a tendency of the stretched elastic casing to restore to its original form to tightly hold the handle head from being disengaged. In

this embodiment of the present invention, the engagement established is akin to donning a glove. In particular, the stretched elastic casing is poised in a contracting state to hold the brush head once the engagement is completely established. There are three separate mechanisms employed therein to effectively hold the brush head which are not suggested or taught in the cited prior art.

[0006] Firstly, when the elastic case is in its contracting state, it grips the brush head tightly, thus generating great friction force between the surface of the brush head and the elastic casing. The generated friction counteracts any pulling or pushing force that might possibly disengage the two parts.

[0007] Secondly, the undersized opening further reinforces the engagement as the force required to stretch the opening to expand and then remove the brush head is much greater than the force applied to the presently claimed toothbrush during daily brushing activity. Therefore, unless the user intends to remove the brush head, accidental disengagement is unlikely during daily use of the present invention.

[0008] Thirdly, the partial vacuum environment created in the cavity means that the air pressure within the cavity is lower compared to the external air pressure. Consequently, the positive atmospheric air pressure requires the user to apply additional force in order to separate the brush head from the handle. No such element or teaching is found in the disclosure of the invention of Dodd, neither in the claims nor the specification, to join the detachable brush head and handle. Instead, Dodd uses a locking nodule and corresponding locking slot to join the brush head onto the handle. Thus, the presently claimed invention is not anticipated by the disclosure of Dodd.

[0009] Moreover, the brush head of the present invention is made of at least two materials with different properties, excluding the bristle. One is a rigid material which is used at least for the bristle pad. Another is an elastic material used for the casing. Again, no such combination of two materials having different properties is claimed or suggested in the prior art, thereby reflecting a lack of anticipation. Nevertheless, a

gum massager fabricated from elastic material is indeed disclosed by US2003/0046780 (page 2 paragraph 14) but the casing of this United States patent never aims to be stretchable or contracting to hold a brush head.

[0010] Further, in newly added claim 17, the means employed in the present invention to further secure and reinforce the engagement is a pair of pins available on the handle and respective holes found in the brush head. It is important to note that these elements are enclosed and hidden within the cavity or passageway once the brush head and handle engagement is established. Such a feature is not found in the cited art.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

[0011] Following cancellation of the claims 13 and 14, rejection under this section is rendered moot.

CONCLUSION

[0012] It is believed that claims 1 and 17-22 are now in a condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

[0013] The Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's Representative as shown below if there are any questions regarding this Response.

Respectfully submitted,

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